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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

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JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: IS, KMDR

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

1. IRAQ
2. ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS

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KEY STORIES IN THE MEDIA:

ALL MEDIA REPORTED MONDAY'S GAZA STRIP RAIDS AND THE LAUNCHING OF QASSAM ROCKETS AT SDEROT, WHICH CAUSED NO LOSS OF LIFE. JERUSALEM POST BANNERED THE CAPTURE OF HAMAS CO-FOUNDER SHEIKH MUHAMMAD TAHA IN THE GAZA STRIP REFUGEE CAMP OF AL-BUREIJ MONDAY. HA'ARETZ REPORTED THAT A PALESTINIAN WAS KILLED IN NABLUS MONDAY. THIS MORNING, ISRAEL RADIO QUOTED STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN RICHARD BOUCHER AS SAYING THAT THE U.S. CONTINUES TO BE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT CIVILIAN CASUALTIES AND THAT IT HAS URGED THE GOI TO TAKE ALL APPROPRIATE PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT THE DEATH OR INJURY OF INNOCENT CIVILIANS AND DAMAGE TO CIVILIAN AND HUMANITARIAN INFRASTRUCTURE. BOUCHER ALSO SAID THAT THE U.S. IS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE INCREASING ISRAELI USE OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS OF DEMOLITIONS AND THE CIVILIAN DEATHS (A PREGNANT WOMAN DIED MONDAY IN SUCH AN ACTION) THAT HAVE RESULTED FROM THIS PRACTICE.

THE IRAQI ISSUE:

HA'ARETZ REPORTED THAT THE U.S. MILITARY HAS "PLUGGED ISRAEL INTO REAL-TIME WAR MONITORING" AND THAT ISRAEL IS NOW PRIVY TO A U.S. EARLY WARNING SYSTEM GIVING DIRECT ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON ANY IRAQI MISSILE LAUNCHES AT ISRAEL, WITH NO DELAY AND NO FILTERING. CITING THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, HA'ARETZ SAYS THAT

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THESE MEASURES ARE AIMED TO KEEP THE IDF OUT OF A
CONFLICT IN IRAQ. HA'ARETZ ALSO NOTED THAT THE U.S.

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EXPECTS ISRAEL TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT EVEN IF IRAQ
SCORES A SUCCESSFUL MISSILE STRIKE ON ISRAEL.
ACCORDING TO THE NEWSPAPER, THE U.S. HAS ALSO WARNED
ISRAEL THAT SHOULD IT RESPOND TO AN IRAQI ATTACK WITH
NON-CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS, IT WOULD IMMEDIATELY FORFEIT
ALL INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT.

HA'ARETZ (AKIVA ELДАР) REPORTED THAT THE DISPUTE
BETWEEN THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT
REGARDING THE ROAD MAP IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE
REMINISCENT OF THE WORST DAYS OF THE UNITY GOVERNMENT
IN ISRAEL. THE NEWSPAPER FURTHER REPORTED THAT A
BIPARTISAN GROUP OF KEY PLAYERS FROM FORMER
ADMINISTRATIONS, HEADED BY THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN
RELATIONS' HENRY SIEGMAN, HAVE LINED UP BEHIND SECSTATE
POWELL'S DETERMINATION TO PRESENT THE ROAD MAP TO
SHARON. IN THE FEBRUARY 13 WALL STREET JOURNAL
ARTICLE, BRENT SCOWCROFT AND ZBIGNIEW BREZINSKI

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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

PRESENTED THE DOCUMENT ISSUED BY THE GROUP.

HA'ARETZ REPORTED THAT GOI OFFICIALS ARE VEHEMENTLY
CRITICAL OF A DRAFT CONSTITUTION PREPARED BY A
PALESTINIAN TEAM. THE NEWSPAPER REPORTED ON A LEGAL
ANALYSIS BY FOREIGN MINISTRY EXPERTS THAT CONCLUDED
THAT THE CONSTITUTION'S PREAMBLE INCLUDES TERMS HOSTILE
TO ISRAEL. HA'ARETZ'S SOURCES REPORTEDLY ADDED, "WE

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WON'T ACCEPT THIS AND NEITHER WILL THE AMERICANS. THE
TERMS EXTEND THE CONFLICT AND DO NOT REFLECT AN END TO
THE CONFLICT BUT A PERPETUATION OF HOSTILITIES."

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HA'ARETZ AND ISRAEL RADIO QUOTED PALESTINIAN SOURCES AS SAYING THAT PA CHAIRMAN ARAFAT IS CONSIDERING NAMING MUNIB AL MASRI OF NABLUS, ONE OF THE WEALTHIEST PALESTINIANS IN THE WORLD, AS PRIME MINISTER WHEN THE PA BODIES MEET THIS WEEKEND.

HA'ARETZ REPORTED THAT MONDAY PUBLIC SECURITY MINISTER TZACHI HANEGBI ASKED THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE TO REJECT A PETITION BY THE AL-QUDS ASSOCIATION FOR ARAB CULTURE AND HERITAGE AGAINST THE CLOSURE OF ITS EAST JERUSALEM OFFICES (ORDERED BY HANEGBI'S PREDECESSOR UZI LANDAU, ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE OFFICES WERE BEING USED BY SARI NUSSEIBEH, WHO HOLDS THE PA'S JERUSALEM PORTFOLIO).

HA'ARETZ REPORTED THAT OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS THE POLICE AND THE WAQF HAVE COORDINATED VISITS TO THE TEMPLE MOUNT BY SEVERAL GROUPS OF JEWS.

MAARIV CITED THE BRITISH SUNDAY TIMES AS SAYING, BASED ON AN ISRAELI DEFENSE SOURCE, THAT ISRAEL INTENDS TO DESTROY HIZBULLAH'S MISSILES DURING THE OFFENSIVE AGAINST IRAQ. MAARIV ALSO REPORTED THAT THE ARGENTINE PROSECUTION HAS ISSUED ARREST WARRANTS FOR 20 IRANIAN OFFICIALS AND A SENIOR HIZBULLAH MEMBER SUSPECTED OF BEING INVOLVED IN THE 1994 ATTACK AGAINST THE ISRAELI EMBASSY IN BUENOS AIRES.

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ALL MEDIA REPORTED THAT MONDAY PM SHARON PRESENTED HIS NEW CABINET TO PRESIDENT KATSAV. SHARON LEFT DAN MERIDOR OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE FIRST CABINET MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE TODAY. HA'ARETZ REPORTED THAT THE LIKUD KNESSET FACTION UNANIMOUSLY CHOSE MK YUVAL SHTEINITZ AS THE NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE KNESSET DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.

ISRAEL RADIO REPORTED THAT THE TRIAL OF ISRAELI BUSINESSMAN DAVID MENASHE, WHO IS ACCUSED OF ATTEMPTING TO IMPORT MILITARY HARDWARE INTO THE U.S., WITH THE INTENTION OF SMUGGLING THEM OUT AGAIN TO CHINA, WILL START IN LOS ANGELES IN APRIL. MAARIV ALSO MENTIONED THE CASE.

LEADING MEDIA REPORTED THAT FRENCH RELATIVES OF VICTIMS OF PALESTINIAN TERROR FILED A LAWSUIT AGAINST ARAFAT IN

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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

A PARIS COURT, ACCUSING HIM OF "GENOCIDE."

1. IRAQ:

SUMMARY:

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CONSERVATIVE, INDEPENDENT JERUSALEM POST EDITORIALIZED:
"SADDAM'S FALL IS THE LITMUS TEST FOR WHETHER THE WEST
WILL EFFECTIVELY DEFEND ITSELF, AND ALMOST EVERYONE IN
THIS REGION KNOWS IT."

FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER, KNESSET MEMBER SHIMON PERES
WROTE IN MASS-CIRCULATION, PLURALIST YEDIOT AHARONOT:
"NOW THAT THE U.S. HAS BEEN ATTACKED, EUROPE MUST STAND
BY ITS SIDE.... NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF ITS HISTORIC DEBT
BUT ALSO TO PREVENT TERROR FROM REACHING ITS DOORSTEP
IN FULL FORCE."

LIBERAL COLUMNIST AND SATIRIST B. MICHAEL WROTE IN
YEDIOT AHARONOT: "IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY OBVIOUS
THAT THE OFFICIAL REASONS [FOR GOING TO WAR] ARE
UNMITIGATED MUMBLE JUMBLE.... [IN FACT,] IT ISN'T THE
OIL, IT'S ONLY THE OIL CURRENCY -- NOT FOR DEMOCRACY,
BUT FOR PLUTOCRACY."

BLOCK QUOTES:

I. "SHOCK AND AWE"

CONSERVATIVE, INDEPENDENT JERUSALEM POST EDITORIALIZED
(MARCH 4): "THE CAPTURE OF AL-QAIDA MASTERMIND KHALID
SHAIKH MUHAMMAD WAS A MAJOR BLOW TO THAT ORGANIZATION,
AND TO THE IDEA THAT THE U.S. CANNOT WALK AND CHEW GUM

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AT THE SAME TIME.... MUHAMMAD'S CAPTURE, AT THE HEIGHT
OF PRE-IRAQ PREPARATIONS, PUTS THE LIE TO THE IDEA THAT
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THE U.S. IS ... EASILY DISTRACTED. THE MORE
FUNDAMENTAL POINT, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE DISTINCTION
BETWEEN THE TWO FIGHTS IS A FALSE ONE.... THE FORCEFUL
DEPOSITION OF SADDAM WILL, MORE THAN ANYTHING DONE TO
DATE, TELL THE WORLD THAT EACH LINCHPIN IN THE TERROR
NETWORK HAS A CHOICE GET OUT OF THE TERROR BUSINESS OR
LOSE POWER.... SADDAM'S FALL IS THE LITMUS TEST FOR
WHETHER THE WEST WILL EFFECTIVELY DEFEND ITSELF, AND
ALMOST EVERYONE IN THIS REGION KNOWS IT."

II. "THE BURIAL PLACE OF TERRORISM"

FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER, KNESSET MEMBER SHIMON PERES
WROTE IN MASS-CIRCULATION, PLURALIST YEDIOT AHARONOT
(MARCH 4): "THERE IS NO WAR AGAINST IRAQ. THERE IS A
GLOBAL WAR AGAINST GLOBAL TERRORISM, WHICH IS DIFFERENT
THAN ANY OF THE WARS WE HAVE KNOWN IN HISTORY. THIS IS
NOT A WAR BETWEEN PEOPLES BUT RATHER ONE OF PEOPLES

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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

AGAINST GANGS.... IT IS A CLASH BETWEEN A WORLD THAT IS
MOVING FORWARD (WHICH HAS IN IT BOTH WEST AND EAST,
BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH, INCLUDING THE TWO MOST HIGHLY
POPULATED COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD -- CHINA AND INDIA --
AND DOZENS OF COUNTRIES ON EVERY CONTINENT) AND A WORLD
THAT IS BOUND BY THE SHACKLES OF YESTERDAY AND TREMBLES
IN FEAR OF DEMOCRACY.... THIS IS A WAR THAT MUST END
WITH DECISIVE VICTORY.... BIN LADEN INITIATED THIS WAR

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AND THE TERRORISTS ARE NOT PREPARED TO END IT. THEY
MAKE USE OF NEW WEAPONS AND OLD DECEIT A LA THE TYRANT
OF BAGHDAD AND THEY ATTEND ONLY TO THEIR NARROW EGO....
IN THE 20TH CENTURY THE UNITED STATES HELPED EUROPE WIN

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THE WARS AND BECOME REHABILITATED AND IT DID NOT DEMAND TERRITORY, TREASURE OR SPECIAL PRIVILEGES IN EXCHANGE. NOW THAT THE U.S. HAS BEEN ATTACKED, EUROPE MUST STAND BY ITS SIDE IN THE SAME WAY. NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF ITS HISTORIC DEBT BUT ALSO TO PREVENT TERROR FROM REACHING ITS DOORSTEP IN FULL FORCE."

III. "IT ISN'T THE OIL, STUPID, IT'S THE OIL MONEY"

LIBERAL COLUMNIST AND SATIRIST B. MICHAEL WROTE IN YEDIOT AHARONOT (MARCH 4): "EVERY DAY THE LONGED-FOR WAR IS APPROACHING, THE MORE OBVIOUS IT BECOMES THAT THE OFFICIAL REASONS [FOR GOING TO WAR] ARE UNMITIGATED MUMBLE JUMBLE -- NOT WMD, NO CONSPIRACY WITH AL-QAIDA, NO THREAT ON THE UNITED STATES, NOT EVEN A THREAT AGAINST [IRAQ'S] NEIGHBORS.... THE SUDDEN HOLY ASPIRATION TO BRING THE GOSPEL OF DEMOCRACY SOUNDS LIKE A JOKE ALTOGETHER. THE BUSH-RUMSFELD-CHENEY-RICE QUARTET PROVES DAILY ... THAT A DEMOCRATIC REGIME ISN'T A GUARANTEE FOR ANYTHING.... THE TRUE REASON FOR THE WAR COULD BE FOUND ... ON THE INTERNET.... W. CLARK IS THE MOST DISTINCT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FOLLOWING THEORY.... THE INTERNATIONAL CURRENCY FOR OIL TRADING IS THE [U.S.] DOLLAR.... THE USD'S DOMINANCE [ON THE OIL MARKET] IS CURRENTLY ALMOST THE SOLE BASIS FOR THE U.S. CURRENCY. THE U.S. ECONOMY IS IN INCREDIBLE DUMPS.... [ON DECEMBER 1, 2000, SADDAM HUSSEIN] ASKED

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THE UN TO SET HIS OIL PRICES IN EUROS RATHER THAN IN DOLLARS... DOCUMENTS SHOW THAT IN EARLY 2001 VOICES IN THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION SUGGESTED MAKING USE OF MILITARY FORCE TO TAKE OVER IRAQ -- NOT TO DEPRIVE THE IRAQI PEOPLE OF OIL, GOD FORBID, BUT TO BRING MUTINOUS IRAQ BACK FROM THE EURO TO THE USD, TO DOMINATE THE IRAQI OIL TRADE AND TO WEAKEN THE OPEC CARTEL. IN A NUTSHELL ... IT ISN'T THE OIL, IT'S ONLY THE OIL CURRENCY -- NOT FOR DEMOCRACY, BUT FOR PLUTOCRACY."

2. ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS:

SUMMARY:

LIBERAL HISTORIAN ALEXANDER YAKOBSON WROTE IN POPULAR,

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PLURALIST MAARIV: "EVENTUALLY, WITH NO TRUE PARTITION
OF THE COUNTRY, THE JEWISH STATE COULD BECOME VIRTUAL."

BLOCK QUOTES:

"A PARTITION OF THE COUNTRY OR THE END OF ISRAEL"

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LIBERAL HISTORIAN ALEXANDER YAKOBSON WROTE IN POPULAR,
PLURALIST MAARIV (MARCH 4): "IT DOESN'T SEEM THAT ANY
INTERIM AGREEMENT WOULD BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE
EVACUATION OF SETTLEMENTS, EVEN ISOLATED ... ONES....
EVEN A CLEAR-CUT DECLARATION ABOUT EVACUATING
SETTLEMENTS IN A FINAL-STATUS AGREEMENT WOULD BE VERY
SIGNIFICANT. IF ONE RECOGNIZES THE FACT THAT IT IS NOT
THE SETTLEMENTS THAT WILL DETERMINE THE BORDER ... BUT
THAT IT IS THE BORDER THAT WILL DETERMINE THE FUTURE OF
THE SETTLEMENTS, THIS COULD BE VIEWED AS A TRUE
REVOLUTION IN THE ISRAELI RIGHT'S POSITION. SUCH A
REVOLUTION SEEMINGLY OCCURRED WHEN THE LIKUD DECIDED TO
CONCEDE TERRITORIES IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL [PALESTINE]
AND WHEN SHARON ACCEPTED THE IDEA OF PALESTINIAN
STATEHOOD. BUT, WITH NO POSITION CHANGE ON THE ISSUE
OF SETTLEMENTS, THE PALESTINIAN STATE COULD BECOME A
PURELY VIRTUAL ONE. EVENTUALLY, WITH NO TRUE PARTITION
OF THE COUNTRY, THE JEWISH STATE COULD BECOME VIRTUAL."

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